

of dedicated service to the City of Burlington and its airport. Marcelle and I wish him and Janet all the best in retirement.

PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, on May 3, 2005, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced the selection of 141 outstanding American high school seniors as the 2005 Presidential Scholars. The Presidential Scholars Program serves to honor outstanding students for their accomplishments in academics or the arts, as well as for their leadership, character and civic contributions to their schools and communities.

The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964 by Executive order of President Lyndon B. Johnson. The Presidential Scholars Program annually selects one male and one female student from each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American students living abroad, 15 at-large students, and up to 20 students in the arts. The students are selected on the basis of outstanding scholarship, service, leadership, and creativity through a rigorous selection and review process administered by the Department of Education. Over 5,000 of the Nation's top students have been honored as Presidential Scholars since this prestigious program's founding.

Of the 141 exceptional students recognized from across the United States for 2005, I would especially like to recognize three students from the great State of Illinois for their accomplishments.

I send my congratulations to the following students for their accomplishments in academics: Kelly A. Zalocusky from Belleville High School East in Belleville, IL, and her teacher Philip C. Short; and Edgar P. Woznica from Fenwick High School in Oak Park, IL, and his teacher Ramzi Farran. For her accomplishments in the arts, I would like to congratulate Marcella J. Capron from Loyola Academy in Wilmette, IL, and her teacher Leslie Yatabe.

Please join me in congratulating the 2005 Presidential Scholars for their accomplishments in academics and the arts. I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

WORLD VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. BAUCUS. I ask unanimous consent that Senator JEFFORDS'S speech before the World Veterinary Association be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Members of the House of Delegates, the World Veterinary Association, other international guests, friends and colleagues . . . I'm honored to be a part of this historic gathering. I'm especially pleased to welcome my fellow veterinarians from around the

world and to be addressing those participating in the first gathering of the World Veterinary Association in the United States since 1934.

Seventy-one years ago, the AVMA and the World Veterinary Association met to discuss the hot issues of the day . . . poultry diseases, advances in food animal medicine, food safety and global disease surveillance. Today we are meeting once again and discussing the issues of our day . . . poultry diseases, advances in food animal medicine, food safety and global disease surveillance.

Three thousand nine hundred seventeen veterinarians attended that 1934 meeting in New York City at the Waldorf Astoria hotel; many from the same countries that are joining us today. To each I extend our most sincere welcome . . . especially to our colleagues from Afghanistan and Iraq . . . I hope that you find this experience to be one of the most memorable of your career.

Well, here we are, 71 years later. And while we may have different languages and customs, different ways communicating with our clients and treating our patients, we have come together once again precisely because we have more in common than ever before. We are united in our quest for a better world and better medicine for both animals and humans. We are united in our concerns, we are unified in our challenges and we are unified in the celebration of our achievements. We are what veterinary medicine is all about.

When I told my wife, Pat, that I was giving this speech, she reminded me of something Muriel Humphrey once told her husband, Hubert, this country's vice president and a favorite son from this great state. She said, "Hubert, a speech doesn't have to be eternal to be immortal." I'll try to remember that.

I come before you today slightly imperfect. As many of you know, I just had a knee replacement.

My recent surgery got me thinking . . . do any of us truly appreciate our knees? Really appreciate the foundation they provide? I know I didn't . . . not until both gave out on me. I quickly came to realize, however, that my knees must work together in unity in order for me to complete the tasks I take for granted. I just assumed they'd provide a solid foundation without much attention from me. I was sadly mistaken.

Paying attention to our profession's basic principles is what I'd like to talk to you about today. We all assume that our professional unity and our rock solid foundation are perpetual. They're not. Without attention and care, our foundation can slowly begin to erode. That's why I am dedicating my presidency to the care and nurturing of our professional unity . . . the essential cornerstone of our great profession.

Traditionally, past AVMA presidents have used this time to present you with a roster of very specific recommendations for new programs and initiatives. Many of those recommendations have resulted in impressive and important changes within the AVMA.

But different times call for different approaches. I come before you today with a total commitment to spending my year at the helm of this great organization working to reaffirm our unity.

As president elect, I've spent much of the past year speaking to a wide variety of veterinary associations and student organizations. In May, when I gave the commencement address at Auburn, I was reminded of my own graduation. I was reminded of my classmates and my professors. Of the long hours and challenges that we faced and survived. I think back to the unity we felt as a class and our coordinated effort to help each other. Doing whatever it took to ensure that each individual met the challenges of the curriculum and graduated.

Unity got us through school . . . and a C+ mean average didn't hurt.

And on our graduation day, we became veterinarians. Not equine veterinarians. Not bovine veterinarians. Not small animal veterinarians. We became veterinarians . . . members of a select group of professionals that dedicate their lives to ensuring the highest standards in animal and public health.

Why is unity more important today than ever before? Aesop said it better than I ever could . . . "we often give our enemies the means for our own destruction."

Today our profession is facing challenges, the likes of which we've never seen before. From town hall to Capitol Hill . . . from the classroom to the laboratory . . . from the farm to the dinner table . . . our attention is being pulled in a myriad of directions. In light of those challenges, we must remain focused . . . we must stay united. While we may practice in different disciplines involving different species of animals, we must be one vision, one voice. We must maintain the highest standards in medicine and public health, encouraging and assisting others in accomplishing the same. While we may practice in different parts of the world, we must foster unity with our fellow veterinarians from around the globe. Good medicine knows no boundaries . . . knows no borders. We must cooperate and collaborate with our fellow veterinarians worldwide . . . to make this world a better place for animals and humans, alike.

Has there always been perfect unity within the profession? If you look back in the annals of our convention or in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, you will see many instances where we did not all agree. We are a diverse profession and there are bound to be differences in opinion. But I would argue that the French essayist, Joubert, was right when he said, "the aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress."

Some of the differences our profession is experiencing today may just be a reflection of what is happening to society as a whole.

For example, we've moved away from an agricultural society. In the past 20 years, many of our colleagues have chosen a metropolitan setting, where they concentrate on companion animals. As a result, the number of food animal graduates has slowed to a trickle. The reality, however, is that food animal practitioners are more important to society than ever before. There is an acute shortage of food animal veterinarians during a time when the world is threatened by zoonotic and foreign animal diseases. At the same time, we are experiencing the same crisis level shortages of public health veterinarians. Most new graduates are not choosing a career in this essential segment of veterinary medicine. The profession must find ways to encourage undergraduates to enter food animal and public health practice.

In an attempt to resolve the critical food animal veterinary shortage, AVMA has been working on a number of strategies and initiatives.

For example, as many of you know, the AVMA helped fund a study to estimate the future demand and availability of food supply veterinarians and to investigate the means for maintaining the required numbers.

AVMA also approved and financially supported the development of benchmarking tools for production animal practitioners by the National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues. These benchmarking tools are designed to provide our current practitioners with help in ensuring that their practices are financially successful. That, in turn, will assist in attracting future veterinarians to food animal practice.

The government relations division of the AVMA is diligently working to convince Congress to provide federal funding for the National Veterinary Medical Service Act. If fully funded, that act could go a long way toward encouraging recent graduates to practice food animal medicine in under-served areas and provide veterinary services to the federal government in emergency situations. Just last month, the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee approved \$750,000 for a pilot program. We applaud the efforts of Representatives Pickering and Turner . . . and Senators Cochran and Harkin . . . all of whom sponsored the original bill. And I want to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee, especially Senator Brownback for his kind words and commitment to veterinary medicine.

AVMA is also lobbying our federal legislators to pass the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act . . . an important piece of legislation that will provide us with sorely needed public health and public practice veterinarians. Today's public health practitioners play an invaluable role in U.S. agriculture, food safety, zoonotic disease control, animal welfare, homeland security and international standards and trade. Without an adequate number of public health veterinarians, the wellbeing of our nation—yes, even the world—is at risk. Senator Allard has been invaluable and unwavering in his dedication to moving this act forward through the complicated legislative process. I intend to do everything I can as president to provide support to Senator ALLARD's effort to pass the veterinary workforce expansion act.

On the international education level, AVMA has been committed to the global unity of the profession for decades. The AVMA Council on Education has partnered with Canada since the accreditation system was developed and has accredited six foreign veterinary colleges. We are working with six additional schools. We're extremely proud of those colleges. As more inquiries come forward, it's self evident that the world looks to us as the gold standard in educational goals and expectations.

At the same time, I will be supporting the efforts of our specialty organizations to attract and train the new practitioners they need. Currently, there are 20 veterinary specialty organizations comprising 37 distinct areas of expertise under the AVMA umbrella.

The AVMA economic report on veterinarians and veterinary practices has revealed a substantial difference between the incomes of specialists and non-specialists practicing in similar disciplines. I will, as president, encourage the development of additional in-depth financial surveys that, hopefully, will motivate our undergraduates to further their education and achieve specialty status . . . thus helping ensure that public demand for advanced veterinary medical services are being met while, at the same time, increasing our economic base.

Hopefully, these additional specialists will serve as a resource for our veterinary colleges who are becoming increasingly understaffed.

In the past fifteen years, we've seen a shift in the demographics of our profession. I'll bet there were plenty of raised eyebrows when McKillips College, in 1903, and the Chicago Veterinary College, in 1910, graduated our country's first female veterinarians. It's hard to believe that as recently as 1963 the profession included only 277 female veterinarians.

We're proud of the fact that an increasing number of our graduates are women. Their contributions and leadership have strengthened our profession. However, the recent AVMA-Pfizer study confirmed lower mean female incomes within the profession. Now is

the time to explore solutions to that problem, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that this issue is thoroughly investigated and addressed.

To achieve unity, I firmly believe that we must be inclusive, not exclusive. The public has always been well served by the diversity in our practice areas. Now, we must diversify our membership. The AVMA . . . with more than 72,000 members representing 68 constituent organizations in the House of Delegates . . . must now seek to represent every race, creed and color. As a profession, we must mirror the public, and they us. We must become a profession more reflective of the population we serve.

Over thirty years ago, Dr. H.J. Magrane, then president of the AVMA, spoke often and passionately about the need for inclusion and equality in our profession. As a profession, we have still not made the advances in diversity that are necessary.

As the great social scientist Margaret Mead said . . . "in diversity . . . we will add to our strength."

In order to achieve our diversity goals, we must initiate both practical and creative ideas to arrive at an enriched membership. It's up to us . . . all of us . . . to reach out to young people and to nurture their interests and talents so that we become the shining example of professional diversity. We need to be involved in youth groups, in churches, and in our public schools . . . and united in our quest, so that others say, "we must emulate the AVMA."

Once in veterinary school, our students . . . all our students . . . need to know that we, as a profession, are there to mentor and to help them through the special challenges they face. None of us got to where we are today without at least one special person . . . one special veterinarian . . . who took us under his or her wing and proved to be our own, personal cornerstone. We can do no less for those who are striving today to become members of our profession.

In what programs is the AVMA currently involved concerning diversity? First, at its April 2005 meeting, the Board approved the establishment of a Task Force on Diversity. That task force will recommend steps that we must take to meet our goals in diversity.

But here's something you can do in the immediate future. Tomorrow, our convention will offer a full day diversity symposium, including an appearance by Doctor Debbye Turner, veterinarian, former Miss America and contributor to the CBS early show. I hope many of you will plan on spending part of your day attending these important meetings, if time permits.

Diversity will also be an integral part of the 2006 Veterinary Leadership Conference. Each of these opportunities is designed to help us achieve the diversity we've talked about for so long.

So what's on our want list for 2005? As I've mentioned, critical shortages exist in food animal and public health veterinarians. But we also are desperately in need of teachers and researchers. We need policy experts and homeland security professionals. We need legislative leaders, and we need veterinarians who are visionaries and who can lead us in this era of globalization. There exists such critical shortages in so many areas that some days I wonder if our small numbers can, in fact, make a difference.

But then I am asked to speak somewhere. And I look at the enthusiastic faces in my audience . . . established veterinarians who are deeply involved in their state and local associations, students who live and breathe only to count off the days until they can touch their dream, high school students with straight A's who are anxious to know what else they have to do to make it into veteri-

nary school, third graders with a commitment to animals that rivals the grit and determination of a Jack Russell terrier . . . and I know that we will not only survive . . . but thrive.

As I've said, my presidency will be dedicated to re-energizing the unity that has always been our strength and foundation. As another president from the northeast, John F. Kennedy, once said, "Let us not be blind to our differences—but let us also direct attention to our common interests."

Ladies and gentlemen, our common interests are so much greater than our differences. Like the society and world around us, we are changing. And change is never easy. But with your help, and our combined dedication and attention to preserving and protecting our unity of purpose, we will thrive and remain one of the most admired and respected professions in the world.

During the coming year, I will be looking to you for help. I will listen . . . and I will participate. I will follow your lead . . . and I will lead to enlighten. I implore each of you to participate in this great organization and make it your own. For you are the teachers . . . you are the visionaries . . . you are veterinary medicine.

Thank you.

NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, today I rise to congratulate an Illinois resident who has received national recognition for her contributions to the American artistic community. Ms. Albertina Walker of Chicago, the "Queen of Gospel Music," has been selected to receive a National Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts, NEA.

The highest honor in the field of folk and traditional arts, these fellowships are awarded to 12 outstanding artists each year to recognize their contributions to their fields. They are selected based on their artistic excellence and cultural authenticity.

National Heritage Fellowships are not open to application but are based on nominations from members of the public. Begun in 1982, these fellowships consist of a \$20,000 grant and are part of the NEA's mission of supporting excellence in the arts, both new and traditional. Previous National Heritage Fellowship recipients have included such artists as B.B. King and John Lee Hooker.

The Grammy-award winning Ms. Walker is a native of Chicago and has been involved in gospel music for over 70 years. She has recorded over 60 albums and is an active member of West Point Missionary Baptist Church.

I thank the National Endowment for the Arts for its recognition of Ms. Walker's outstanding work and once again applaud Ms. Walker for her achievement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF BUFFALO, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a community in